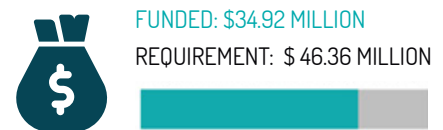
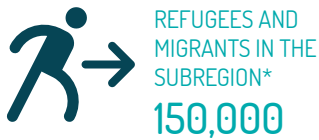




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## 1. Overview

As 2020 marked the fourth year of the Venezuelan crisis, which has affected over 5.4 million refugees and migrants globally, the number of Venezuelans fleeing their country, continued to grow. The number of Venezuelans seeking refugee status worldwide had an increase of 8,000 per cent since 2014, mainly in the Americas.<sup>1</sup> As of December 2020, an estimated 195,979 Venezuelans had sought protection, basic rights and essential services in the Caribbean. From this rapidly increasing figure, in 2020 an estimated 17,000 settled in Aruba, 17,000 in Curaçao, 114,500 in the Dominican Republic, 23,300 in Guyana and 24,000 in Trinidad and Tobago. In the Dominican Republic, the number of Venezuelans in the country significantly increased from 41,000 to 114,500, not due to massive influx but due to the fact that, using migratory balance, the national authorities calculated that the real figures were actually higher than previously estimated. In 2020, 28,452 persons have been provided with some form of assistance, 2,495 in Aruba, 2,380 in Curaçao, 4,324 in the Dominican Republic, 8,501 in Guyana and 10,752 in Trinidad and Tobago.<sup>2</sup> Partners estimate that by the end of 2021 over 170,000 Venezuelans and 36,000 people from host communities will be in need of assistance and protection in the Caribbean. This total of over 214,00

estimated population in need in the Caribbean in 2021 represents an increase of almost 10 per cent in comparison with the 194,600 figures for 2020.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout the Caribbean, this situation has further strained different countries with already stretched services, raising concerns and integration challenges, as governments and host communities responded to the needs of Venezuelans, in addition to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019, the island of [Aruba hosted the world's largest number of Venezuelans displaced abroad](#) relative to its population (1 in 6) while Curaçao hosted third largest proportion of Venezuelan refugees and migrants, with 1 in 10 persons. As Caribbean R4V countries adopt different approaches to respond to the influx, some have imposed visa requirements,<sup>4</sup> adding more challenges. As a result of these

<sup>3</sup> For further information on people reached by the R4V activities by sector in the Caribbean, please see the [Consolidated Statistics for the R4V Caribbean – December 2020](#).

<sup>4</sup> In Curaçao, the reduced the number of flights in 2019, made very difficult to access the territory. In late 2019, Aruba and Curaçao also announced the implementation of a visa requirement. In March 2020, “due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the implementation of the visa requirement for Venezuelans scheduled to start on 1 April was postponed until further notice. Venezuelans remain visa exempted for all Caribbean islands of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, though they are affected by the border closures”. Aruba & Curaçao Situation Report, April 2020.

<sup>1</sup> [UNHCR - Venezuela situation](#)

<sup>2</sup> [R4V platform - Caribbean situation](#)



restrictions, Venezuelans have been forced to resort to dangerous boat travels and are exposed to human trafficking and smuggling risks, as well as risks at sea, which have claimed the lives of many people, while others have gone missing. Additionally, many Venezuelans in the sub-region arrived with tourist visas and were left with few options to obtain a residency or work permit, having no access to basic services or employment, thereby leaving them particularly vulnerable to trafficking and various forms of abuse and exploitation.

With reports of the first cases of COVID-19 in the sub-region in March 2020 and the subsequent closure of borders, lockdown, curfews and restrictions, the situation of Venezuelans has become increasingly dire, as many have lost their livelihoods, faced evictions and food insecurity and were confronted by exacerbated protection risks that were already present in many sub-regional countries. By the end of December 2020, the reported numbers of COVID-19 cases for each of the Caribbean countries in the sub-region increased significantly. Aruba had 6,068 cases of COVID-19; Curaçao 4,464; Trinidad and Tobago 7,273; and Guyana 6,588. The Dominican Republic reached a total of 183,282 cases by the last day of December.<sup>5</sup> Preventative measures in the Caribbean sub-region such as wearing of masks and physical distancing continue, with less strict protocols compared to mid-2020. All the above-mentioned countries reopened airports, except [Trinidad and Tobago](#). [Aruba](#) implemented a negative COVID-19 test requirement and a 10-day quarantine to enter the country. [Curaçao](#) advised travelers to avoid entering the island, and [Guyana](#) reopened its borders to international flights on 12 October, requiring negative PCR tests to access the country. Discussion of plans to administer the COVID-19 vaccine took place [T&T](#) and [Guyana](#), with plans to include non-nationals.

<sup>5</sup> According to Worldometer data for 31 December 2021.

## 2. Needs analysis

As an increasing number of Venezuelans continued to arrive in the Caribbean with few resources to meet their basic needs, the COVID-19 context posed further challenges to their vulnerabilities. According to the [Caribbean Covid-19 Food Security and Livelihoods Impact Survey](#) published by CARICOM with support of WFP, in April 2020, the pandemic has had far-reaching impacts on how people earn a living and meet critical needs. Half of the respondents indicated they had faced a change in income, owing mainly to job loss or reduced salary and businesses being affected by curfews and closures. The widespread disruption of livelihoods undoubtedly impacted Venezuelans as most of them were engaged in the informal labor market. They often did not benefit from social safety nets and are hence highly exposed to the changes of context. In July 2020, a [second round of this survey](#) was published, which concluded that although measures were eased in response to decreasing COVID-19 cases, the larger impacts of the pandemic on how people live, work and meet their basic needs have continued – and in some cases these impacts

In mid-2020, elections were held in some of the Caribbean countries. The [Dominican Republic](#) and [Guyana](#) both held Presidential elections and the new government authorities took office in August 2020. Both administrations demonstrated a willingness to cooperate with R4V partners. In the Dominican Republic, the new President worked to prevent a declaration of unconstitutionality of the Decree 262-20 that granted Dominican nationality through naturalization, and which was approved in February 2020, granting naturalization to 750 people including Venezuelans. In [Trinidad and Tobago](#), general elections happened in the same month, resulting in the previous government being re-elected.

Since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, lockdowns and confinement measures resulted in severe hardships for host populations, refugees and migrants, causing a sudden loss of income and undermining their capacity to meet basic needs. Although measures were being relaxed, due to the length of time that measures have been in place, refugees and migrants were faced with heightened health and protection risks such as evictions and exposure to exploitation and violence, including gender-based violence (GBV). To illustrate this, in total, throughout the sub-region, one R4V partner received 522 queries on GBV through its hotlines during 2020. Mental distress caused by isolation and socioeconomic difficulties continued as well. In light of this dramatic change of context, national platforms developed preparedness and response plans to contain the spread of COVID-19 in the Caribbean. They also adapted the delivery of emergency assistance (food assistance, hygiene kits, non-food items and shelter support) and psychosocial support while minimizing direct contact using remote interviews, cash-based interventions (CBI) and vouchers.

appeared to be worsening. A third round of this survey is under preparation in the first quarter of 2021.

By the beginning of 2020, growing needs in the Caribbean sub-region were identified such as: access to territory and access to asylum and regularization, including alternative legal pathways. While the Government implemented an immigration pathway allowing Venezuelans to legally stay in Guyana, permits did not allow for work, exposing refugees and migrants to exploitation and abuse.

With the objective of obtaining first-hand data on specific thematic areas and guidance for planning, programming and advocacy, partners conducted Inter-Agency Participatory Assessments across the sub-region. In Aruba and Curaçao, R4V participatory assessments were conducted during February and March, prior to the implementation of the stay-at-home measures, prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews, the views,

feedback and experiences of 42 Venezuelans in Aruba and 66 in Curaçao were shared directly with R4V partners and both Governments.

Both exercises in Aruba and Curaçao underscored that lack of legal status is the main root cause of protection concerns for Venezuelans; as it causes ripple effects on all aspects of refugee and migrants' daily lives and prevents them from accessing rights such as access to national health systems or justice. Moreover, it was an obstacle towards durable integration. According to the reports,<sup>6</sup> Venezuelans in Aruba and Curaçao are exposed to risks of exploitation, abuse and rights violations. They were nevertheless reluctant to lodge complaints with the authorities because they fear detention and deportation due to their irregular status. In Curaçao, Venezuelans also cited inadequate housing, social isolation and family separation as sources of concern, while in Aruba, most Venezuelans worked in the informal sector and were concerned about unpredictability of income and the lack of possibilities for family reunification.

In 2020, Trinidad and Tobago held 39 Focus Group Discussions with women, men, boys adolescents, girls adolescents, UASC<sup>7</sup>, persons with serious medical condition, disability, LGBTI and SGBV survivors (5 group and 34 in-depth individual discussions). 2020 Participatory Assessments used mixed methods to consult with the population and gather feedback, including targeted focus-group discussions in January, February and December 2020 and semi-structured interviews with more vulnerable individuals, including children, while on home visits and during community events throughout the year. The discussions addressed subjects of safety and security, livelihoods, health, education and communication, and shed light on protection risks that asylum-seekers and refugees face in the host country and their coping mechanisms. Solution proposals were presented by some of the participants and results of this exercise fed into the R4V response strategies for 2021 and beyond.

Furthermore, one partner in Aruba conducted a Post Distribution Monitoring exercise in May and November to assess the effectiveness of cash-based assistance to respond to medical needs. The exercise confirmed the challenges faced by Venezuelan refugees and migrants to access healthcare in Aruba and how crucial humanitarian assistance is, to get medical services for some individuals, in particular for one-off, short-term or urgent medical needs.

In addition to participatory assessments, the Americas Protection Monitoring Tool<sup>8</sup> was piloted in the Dominican Republic between August 2019 to March 2020. Main findings indicated that 34% out of the 759 people interviewed had specific needs, 49% had no residence permit or legal status and 46% had a tourist visa. Additionally, 74 refugees and migrants highlighted in 250 interviews, that 60% had suffered incidents such as robbery or theft, intimidation, kidnapping, physical-violence or sexual

harassment among others. Of this number, 2.82% reported having experienced sexual harassment. On a positive note, 80% of the 759 respondents had children enrolled in public schools and 45% of the interviewees had completed tertiary education or had attended university. Nevertheless, despite the highly qualified profile of Venezuelans in the Dominican Republic, 84% of the 230 interviewees were unable to secure fixed employment despite their having completed tertiary education/acquired higher level tertiary certification.

**“ In the Dominican Republic, 80% of the 759 protection survey respondents had children attending school and 45% of the interviewed had tertiary education or had attended university**

In light of the surge of COVID-19 cases and the new presence of Venezuelan refugees and migrants living in remote impoverished shelters in Icacos, a locality on the Southwestern tip of Trinidad and Tobago, and one of the entry points for Venezuelans, R4V partner agencies and local civil society organizations conducted three separate Needs Assessment missions<sup>9</sup>. In this remote area, some 80 indigenous Warao Venezuelan refugees and migrants, including children, lived in makeshift shelters by the beach, and presented needs related to access to adequate shelter, water and services for children (including education). As hygiene conditions were not up to standards, they were exposed to communicable diseases such as mosquito borne diseases and the COVID-19 virus. To respond to identified needs, R4V partners discussed recommendations with the local council, including the relocation to legal occupancy space, improvement of the water, sanitation and hygiene conditions and the extension of educational services for the children. Some of the members of the group have been relocated to another small village, San Rafael, in East Trinidad where they were supported with shelter, food and other basic necessities, including informal education and language classes for their children. Also, they benefitted from cash for work programs and livelihoods support.

One R4V partner investigated the impact of COVID-19 on refugee and migrant children in [Trinidad and Tobago](#), examining the main risks that they faced amidst the pandemic. The [disruption in education](#) was a main obstacle that severely impacted or limited in-person and at-home learning due to the restrictive measures imposed, which included the end of presential classes at schools and classes being canceled for some periods. Family tensions and worsening of nutritional conditions were also among the risks that children are exposed to, which the COVID-19 outbreak deteriorated due to increased time at home, and higher levels of unemployment. The R4V partner and the donor of this project

6 Internal assessments in Aruba and Curaçao

7 Unaccompanied and Separated Children

8 UNHCR Protection Monitoring Tool

9 IOM Trinidad and Tobago (May 2020), Mission to Determine Needs on Indigenous Warao Community located in Icacos, South Trinidad. Trinidad & Tobago. Internal Report: UNHCR (2020) Mission to Determine Needs on Indigenous Warao Community located in Icacos, South Trinidad. Trinidad & Tobago Mission to determine needs. Internal Report.



proposed that the effectiveness of current services delivered to migrant children be strengthened by expanded efficiency and coverage of existing programmes, increased reliability, enhanced collaboration and partnerships, and constant monitoring.

Due to COVID-19 limitations and increased needs, new hotlines were established by partners in Aruba, Curaçao and Trinidad and Tobago and by Governments in Guyana and the Dominican Republic. These hotlines were key to understanding the situation and needs of refugees and migrants. For instance, there was an increase in the number of calls to hotlines in Trinidad and Tobago, leading to a further expansion of hotline services. Hotline operators were trained on counselling and providing appropriate information, recording cases and making referrals to case managers. Additionally, standard responses to FAQs on COVID-19 were provided to staff operating the hotlines. Partners started recording data on 24 March, and noted that by 31 December, there had been more than 3,200 queries related to CBI on one partner’s hotline, followed by over 2,100 calls about registration and more than 600 related to accessing food assistance.

as the pandemic lasted. Requests for assistance with basic needs superseded requests for legal assistance needs in the priority ranking. Throughout the period, refugees and migrants demonstrated a preference for the helpline against the mailbox. In September, following UNHCR’s enhanced outreach campaign on accessing rejected asylum seekers and those considered to be at risk of forced return, the number of calls and emails increased requesting legal advice, information, and assistance. Calls were on a decline in November and December and during this period, the R4V partner mainly received calls regarding urgent cases that were at risk for detention, deportation, and for persons in need of CBI. The partner managing the hotlines recorded a total of 797 calls throughout 2020 for information, advice, and referrals for other services.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the R4V Regional Protection Sector, in coordination with the national and sub-regional platforms, observed that specific groups of people among the Venezuelan refugee and migrant communities were disproportionately affected by restrictions and preventative measures, and faced additional obstacles to access services and protection mechanisms, significantly increasing their vulnerabilities. It was decided to gather, analyze and systematize information about the specific protection needs experienced by five groups of people, namely sex workers/persons involved in prostitution, people living with HIV, people with mental health issues, people who were evicted from their home and indigenous refugees and migrants. In the Caribbean, sex workers/persons involved in prostitution and indigenous refugees and migrants were prioritized for these consultations with the objective to understand better their situation and needs. During the months of November and December 2020, with the support of a regional consultant, six Focus Group Discussions and three interviews were carried out with sex workers and service providers in Guyana, Curaçao, Trinidad and Tobago and the Dominican Republic. In an effort to inform future humanitarian interventions and to advocate with national institutions for better access to services and protection, main findings will be shared in a regional report and country specific documents in 2021.

Finally, in 2021, the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) 2020 findings for the Caribbean, through which an R4V partner collects information about refugee and migrant demographic characteristics, labor market participation, trip details,

### JOINT MARKET ASSESMENT

Consistent with the Protection Monitoring tool findings, the R4V joint market assessment on livelihoods for the Venezuelan population in the Dominican Republic, conducted by R4V partners, highlighted that Venezuelan refugees and migrants bring skills and expertise to the country and are an asset to the development strategy, but that the vast majority cannot access the formal labor

The study was presented in May 2020 in an event hosted by the National Immigration Institute and in the presence of national authorities. R4V partners seized the opportunity to advocate for the regularization of Venezuelans in the Dominican Republic at the event.

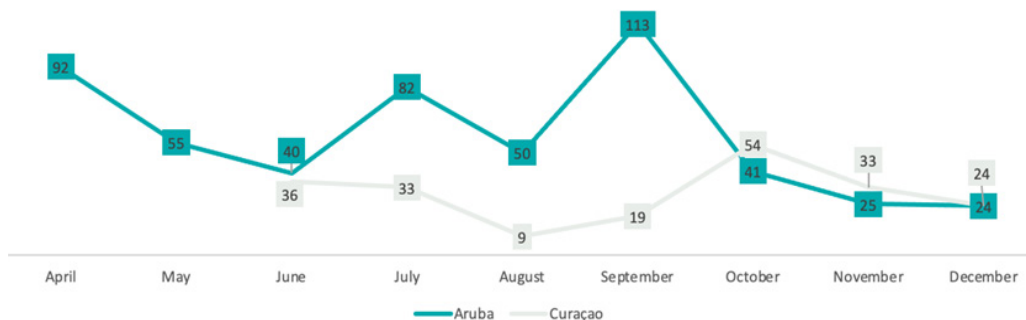
[LINK](#)



Aruba and Curaçao R4V partners continued receiving communications through hotlines and emails until the end of 2020. Calls related to asylum application, certificate renewal and resettlement decreased in the aftermath of the first COVID-19 wave. However, noteworthy was that there was an increased number of calls to another partner’s helpline with requests for emergency support such as food and cash assistance

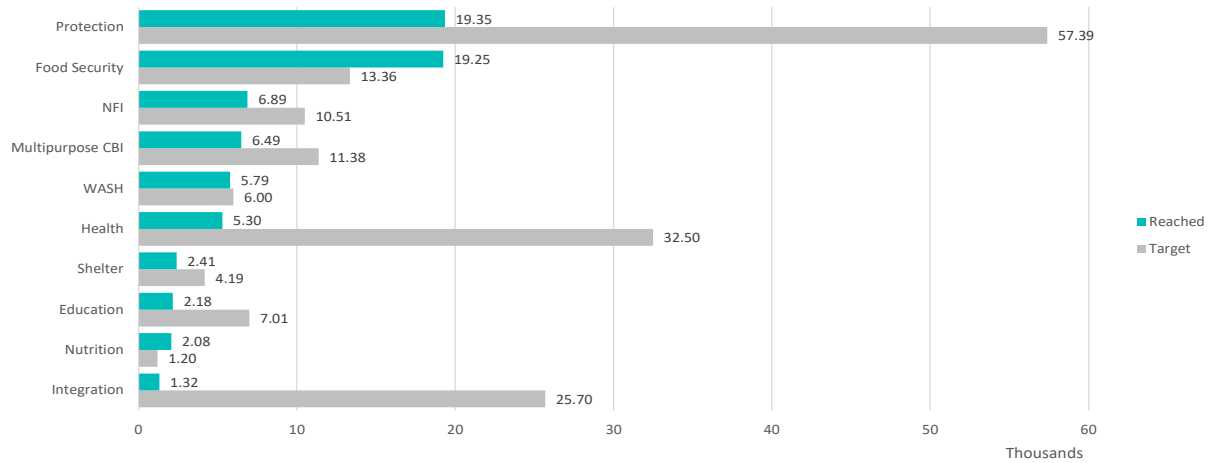
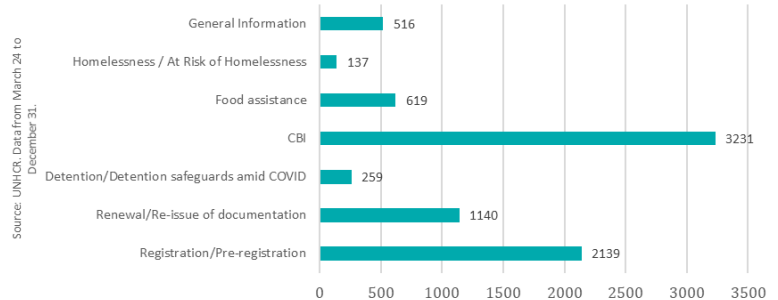
TOTAL HOTLINES’  
BENEFICIARIES PER MONTH  
IN 2020

ARUBA AND CURAÇAO PART-  
NER



difficulties encountered while travelling, and more, will be launched. The research will show a profile of refugees and migrants travelling across the Caribbean countries in 2020, shedding light on variations in the profile of migrants and refugees arriving in each country; the living conditions they experience upon arrival; and their intentions to remain, move onward to another country, or return to Venezuela. The DTM data will also offer important insights into where migrants and refugees turn for health care, and how readily they have been able to access it, including special information on the COVID-19 impact in the region.

### TOTAL NUMBER OF QUERIES RECEIVED VIA ONE R4V PARTNER'S HOTLINES OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO IN 2020



### TOTAL TARGETS VS PEOPLE REACHED (VENEZUELAN AND HOST COMMUNITY) IN THE CARIBBEAN SUB-REGION THROUGH R4V ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BETWEEN JANUARY AND DECEMBER 2020



### 3. Response

#### a. Education

With the exception of the Dominican Republic, where refugee and migrant children have the right to access education and speak the local language, education is a key area of intervention in the subregion, particularly in Trinidad and Tobago, where Venezuelan children do not have access to the national school system. Most pressing challenges across the sub-region are language and cultural barriers, the high costs of school supplies (stationary, textbooks, uniforms, transportation, insurance and meals) or parents’ lack of awareness on available programmes. Additionally, many teachers also face lack of experience and training in working with second language learners, or children suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), as well as in countering xenophobia, sprouting in the form of bullying. In all five countries there is a lack of recognition of secondary and tertiary education diplomas and thus access to university remains limited. Moreover, in many cases unregistered children do not obtain accredited diplomas.

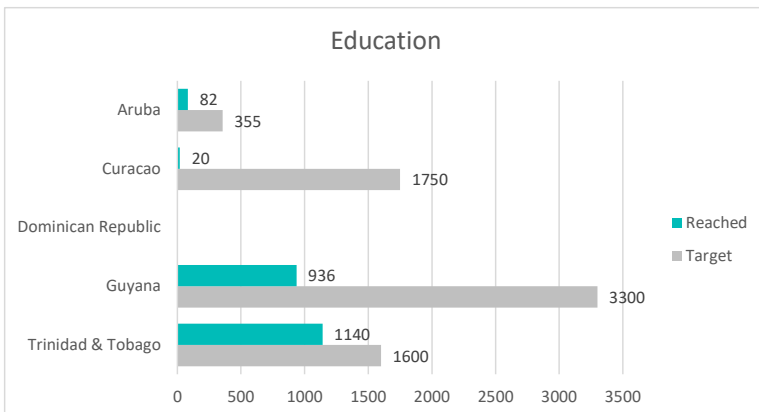
In Aruba and Curaçao, children have access to primary and secondary schools but are required to provide mandatory school insurance, and in the case of Aruba, a “local guarantor”. In both islands, classes are conducted in Dutch, Papiamentu and in English for Curaçao. In Trinidad and Tobago, foreigners must provide student permits to attend schools which is not available for many children due to the irregular status of their parent(s). In Guyana, since the influx of Venezuelans started in 2018, the already stretched school system has become saturated, with the added particularity that many Venezuelan refugee and migrant children in Guyana are indigenous. Thanks to R4V support, national capacity of public schools is being enhanced by improving existing infrastructure, providing resources, and training teachers to work

on cultural integration, second language learners’ techniques and to provide assistance to children with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

The unanticipated closure of schools during the lockdown caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has further affected access to education for this population that has limited access to online modalities of the programmes due to gaps in technology and unavailability of consistent power supplies, internet connection and devices. In Trinidad & Tobago, there has been an increase of 37% in the demand for online education services for refugees and migrants. Such needs were met for Venezuelan children through an R4V supported educational scheme called Equal Place. Physical learning spaces had to close, and “Equal Place” shifted from a blended format to a fully online scheme. At the end of 2020, there were still approximately 1,000 children unable to access any educational programs in T&T.

In Aruba, following reports of an increase in the number of children awaiting the opening of additional Dutch language support classes (called “Prisma” classes) partners advocated for access to education for refugee and migrant children with the Department of Public Schools and the Director of the Catholic School System (SKOA). In this framework, an Education working group was established under the R4V National Platform to ensure that Venezuelan children and youth have access to education, diploma validation and certification of their studies at the end of their schooling<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> For more information on education for the Caribbean R4V platform, please see [Education Sector Background Notes - Caribbean \(r4v.info\)](#)



## EDUCATION

### BACKGROUND NOTES

Even in countries where official access is granted for public primary and secondary schooling, Venezuelan children and youth face administrative, financial, language and cultural barriers to quality education and limitations on accessing tertiary education not to mention the occasional xenophobia which has translated into cases of bullying at school.



### b. Health

As access to medical services constitutes a challenge in their country of origin, there is a high number of Venezuelans in need of health care. However, access to national health systems in the Caribbean is also difficult. Although refugees and migrants can access primary health care in the Dominican Republic, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, in practice, Venezuelans face lack of resources, information, language and administrative barriers or, irregular status and consequent fear of detention or deportation. In 2020, Venezuelans did not have access to the national health systems in Aruba and Curaçao. Nevertheless, thanks to R4V advocacy efforts, Aruba, Curaçao, Dominican Republic, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago agreed that all persons, including refugees and migrants regardless of status, would have access to COVID-19 testing and related treatment.

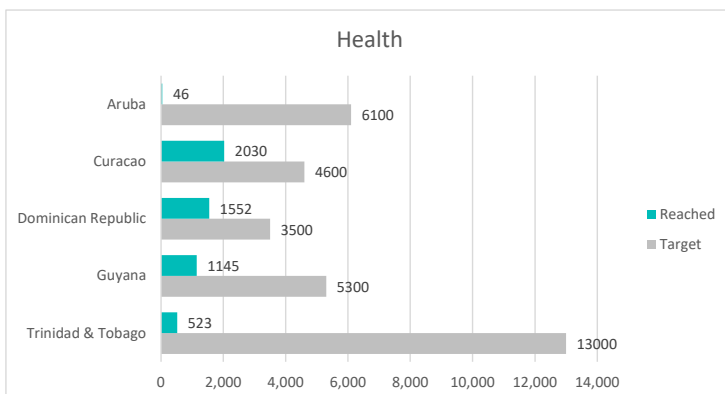
Since health systems in receiving countries were overstretched, subregional R4V partners generally focused on supporting and building stronger health systems, prioritizing specialized care such as sexual and reproductive health services and treatment for chronic conditions. In Curaçao, access to health was supported by one local clinic serving the unregistered Venezuelan population, opened with the support of one R4V partner. Between January and December 2020, more than 10,000 consultations were conducted for some 2,400 undocumented refugees and migrants, who were unable to access medical provisions through the national health insurance system<sup>11</sup>. The clinic offered primary, reproductive, prenatal and maternity care, as it provides contraceptives and HIV and diabetes care. Additionally, the staff of the clinic was trained to perform COVID-19 testing. In Aruba, R4V partners provided medical vouchers, family planning advice, distribution of contraceptives and a COVID-19 free hotline in Spanish for Venezuelans refugees and migrants in the country. In Trinidad and Tobago, RMRP partners rolled out a mobile clinic that provided access to sexual and reproductive health to Venezuelan refugees and migrants, particularly to remote communities. Partners also introduced virtual medicine facilities

and implemented virtual mental health support with the introduction of a hotline and telehealth service that was met with a very positive response. In-person clinic services for refugees and migrants resumed in June on an appointment basis, two days per week, as during the rest of the week, remote modalities are available. Partners in the Dominican Republic delivered preventative medicine, information on health service access, and at the same time provided cash assistance to allow for life-saving services such as exams, consultations and medicine. Community-led medical brigades also offered free health care in the country that included Venezuelan refugees and migrants.

Adding to the challenges that existed prior to the pandemic, lockdown and movement restrictions have aggravated the difficulties in accessing health care and assistance and has contributed to increased needs. Furthermore, given the wide loss of livelihoods caused by the pandemic and the need to share accommodations, refugees and migrants have been unable to self-quarantine and follow physical distancing measures, which resulted in mental distress and increased exposure to infectious diseases (including COVID-19). In parallel to advocacy efforts, partners were forced to adjust their health activities to the new context and scaled up remote psychological support and emergency health interventions. With the objective of enhancing governmental response to COVID-19, an R4V partner donated 48 Refugee Housing Units (RHU) to the Guyanese Ministry of Public Health, 13 RHU to the authorities of Aruba and Curaçao and 25 RHU to the authorities of the Dominican Republic, who transformed them into medical and quarantine facilities by June. Additionally, partners donated personal protection equipment (PPE) such as masks and gloves to protect against infection and to improve the availability of key supplies.

The [Health Background Notes](#) for the Caribbean, provides additional information on health interventions by R4V partners during 2020 RMRP.

11 [R4V Health Background Notes - Caribbean](#)



Health journeys in Dominican Republic

### c. Protection

With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the protection environment in the Caribbean dramatically deteriorated. Prior to the pandemic, refugees and migrants from Venezuela in the sub-region already faced limitations in access to asylum and regularization pathways. Issues of detention and deportation for violating immigration regulations were worrisome in some countries<sup>12</sup>. Due to the lack of regular status and documentation, access to essential services and to formal livelihoods was also extremely limited. Limited legal entry pathways increased the risks of exposure to trafficking and sexual/labor exploitation. At the start of the pandemic, given the exceptional and unprecedented situation, some positive developments were noted. In Trinidad and Tobago, authorities extended work and stay permits until December 2020 for Venezuelans who had registered in June 2019 registration exercise while authorities of the Dominican Republic<sup>13</sup>, Aruba and Curaçao scaled back on immigration controls and temporarily suspended deportations.

Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic made access to territory more dangerous, and the resulting loss of livelihoods exacerbated protection risks and the vulnerability of Venezuelan refugees and migrants. This increased their dependency on limited humanitarian aid. Many became in urgent need of shelter, food, and basic goods, while some were also confronted with homelessness and forced evictions, or the threat/risk of eviction. The most vulnerable, such as unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) and single mothers became more at risk of

<sup>12</sup> For further information on the legal framework for the Caribbean R4V platform, please see [Legal Framework Factsheet - Caribbean \(r4v.info\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> The government of the Dominican Republic announced a temporary suspension of deportation and immigration detention for the duration of the State of Emergency.

exploitation, abuse and more prone to accepting exploitative labor arrangements that put their health and wellbeing at risk.

Some refugees and migrants considered the option of returning to Venezuela and only had irregular means available to undertake their travel. R4V partners in Trinidad and Tobago reported that movements to and from Venezuela continued after the outbreak of COVID-19 and the closure of borders despite risks at sea and increased coast guard vigilance. In 2020, over 700 Venezuelans were deported from Trinidad and Tobago. Throughout the year, nine deportation incidents were reported in the months of January, May, July, September, October, November and December. In the last month, in one dire occurrence, the bodies of over 30 Venezuelans, including children, were found 6.3 nautical miles from the city of Güiria, within Venezuela's jurisdiction, after the boat in which they were attempting to enter T&T territory sank. [The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights \(IACHR\)](#) asked Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago "to immediately implement an impartial, effective investigation into the events".

The episode incited a [joint statement](#) from the R4V leading agencies and [statement](#) from the OHCHR which called on governments to "halt pushbacks at sea in violation of the principle of non-refoulement"<sup>14</sup>. Venezuelan authorities stated that the boat sank due to extreme overcrowding, just off the coast of Venezuela. Meanwhile, detentions and deportations to Venezuela continued in December, with 74 persons being returned. To complement efforts on this end, through the R4V, an inter-agency Sub-Working Group on Detention was established in June 2020 to advocate

<sup>14</sup> Under international human rights law, the principle of non-refoulement guarantees that no one should be re- turned to a country where they would face torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and other irreparable harm. Link [here](#).



Cuenta Cuentos Anti-Bullying Boca Chica, Dominican Republic





to authorities to end immigration detention and to support inter-agency coordination in detention and related matters.

In Aruba, about 610 Venezuelans registered from April to December 2020 for voluntary return to Venezuela on the Aruban Department of Integration and Management of Foreigners’ website (DIMAS). The Government of Venezuela (GoV) requested all passengers be tested for COVID-19 before being put on the passenger manifest. Delays from the Venezuelan authorities to grant permission for the return flights were met with protests in front of the Venezuelan consulate in mid-June. When flights were organized, there was concern regarding potential cases of refolement and forced returns. R4V partners advocated against forced returns with national authorities and worked to identify asylum seekers and other individuals unwilling to return and who may be at risk of deportation. Information about rights and the impact of return on migratory and asylum procedures was disseminated among the Venezuelan community and some legal interventions were undertaken to prevent forced returns. Over 600 Venezuelans returned to their home country from Aruba, some returning voluntarily and at least 90 individuals being deported. Over 500 Venezuelans also returned from Curaçao (including deportees). Some 600 Venezuelans returned from the Dominican Republic.

The pandemic represented a setback for some protection activities such as border monitoring and community-based initiatives, which had to be scaled down. Conversely, Communications with Communities was stepped up. It rapidly adjusted to remote modalities and allowed key government communications to reach the general public, after messages were translated into Spanish. This kept the Venezuelan community informed of public advisories related to COVID-19. In Guyana, efforts were also made to reach Venezuelan indigenous communities with translations into Warao language.

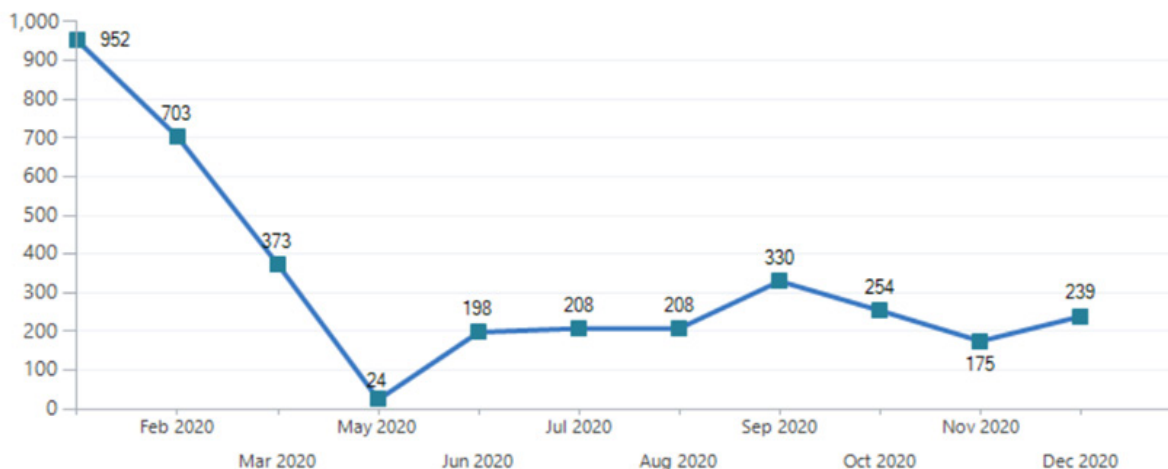
Other activities such as registration for assistance with partners, the provision of legal advice, case management, advocacy and capacity development continued, often through remote modalities. In 2020, partners across the region delivered protection interventions to over 13,500 refugees and migrants and members of the host community. In Trinidad and Tobago, strategic registration activities and Refugee Status Determination continued to be implemented by one partner through in-person and remote modalities. From January to December, one R4V partner pre-registered 7,313 Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Trinidad and Tobago and provided them with relevant information and counselling. Following pre-registration, 3,251 individuals were registered, out of which 1,389 had specific needs, mostly children at risk, serious medical conditions, specific legal situations and GBV cases.

In Guyana, Government-led registration efforts of Venezuelans were conducted through a partner’s innovative tool. The system, set up in February 2020, collected key data including biometric information from refugees and migrants, issuing a renewable entry permit valid for three months<sup>15</sup>. Although registration remained on hold since the outbreak of the pandemic, over 2,000 Venezuelan refugees and migrants were registered in 2020.

In Aruba, R4V partners assisted with the digitalization of data from asylum applications of over 3,051 applicants in 2020, feeding into a database that will benefit evidence-based planning for Government and partners. As an emergency response to the increasing risks of homelessness for Venezuelans, partners in Aruba provided shelter support for 941 refugees and migrants while in the other Caribbean R4V

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/stories/2020/2/5e4b144e4/guyana-pioneers-use-of-advanced-technology-to-help-venezuelans.html>.

VENEZUELANs REGISTERED MONTHLY BY ONE R4V PARTNER IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO FROM 1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2020



SOURCE: R4V PARTNERS DATABASE

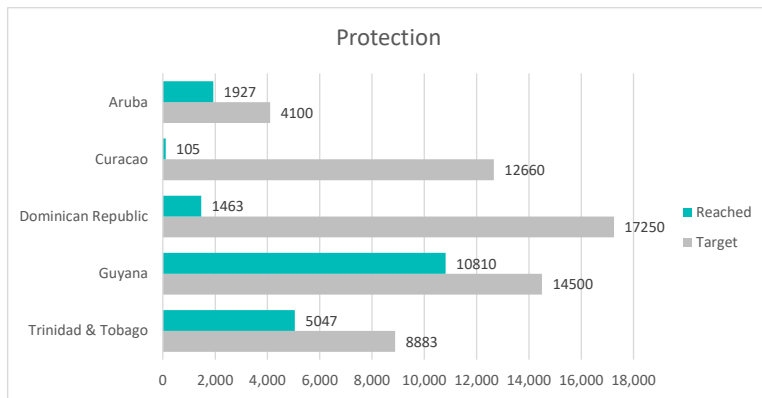
countries, legal advice was provided to refugees and migrants at risk of eviction.

Additionally, to respond to emerging needs caused by the COVID-19-induced disruption of livelihoods, and to mitigate protection risks, R4V partners in the Caribbean sub-region provided food assistance to 19,254 people, WASH interventions to almost 5,800 people and Non-Food Items (including feminine hygiene and baby kits) to more than 6,800 beneficiaries. Furthermore, direct support through multi-purpose cash-based interventions was scaled up across the sub-region, to cover the needs of the most vulnerable refugees and migrants from Venezuela. In total, 6,491 people received cash-based intervention in 2020, in the form of credit cards, vouchers, e-vouchers and cash.

To complement efforts in the protection sector, trainings were delivered to different national platforms. In Curaçao, an International Protection training webinar was offered to R4V partners, local civil society and government actors on the 15 December, facilitating 14 participants. Aruba and Curaçao R4V partners also received training on asylum seekers and refugee rights, via a webinar that took place on September 2020 with 13 participants. On 17 December, technical capacity development was delivered to the Caribbean countries on Refugee Status Determination (RSD) Procedures, seeking to strengthen asylum procedures in the region.

As evident from related calls to hotlines operated by R4V partners in Trinidad and Tobago, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a presumed rise of intimate partner violence<sup>16</sup>. The crumbling of the informal labor market and closing of other businesses, combined with the vast majority of Venezuelans in the Caribbean lacking legal status, has furthermore led to indications that Venezuelan women and girls have increasingly resorted to survival sex/ forced sex work, relationships with local men causing financial dependency and/or in the undue expectation to regularize their status etc.). In Guyana, sex workers, who were working in different remote mining areas that were affected by lock-down measures, were forced to move to other areas to maintain livelihoods.

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.gobierno.aw/actualidad/noticia\\_47171/item/gobernador-a-bishita-fundacion-pa-hende-muhe-den-dificultad\\_49627.html](http://www.gobierno.aw/actualidad/noticia_47171/item/gobernador-a-bishita-fundacion-pa-hende-muhe-den-dificultad_49627.html)



### d. GBV sub sector

As a response, R4V partners provided information, prevention and response services related to GBV to more than 3,000 refugees and migrants and members of the host community in 2020. Fifty-four individuals were trained on GBV prevention and response across the region in 2020.

In June alone, one partner distributed more than 1,500 condoms to sex workers and provided remote information and sensitization sessions for 190 sex workers in Guyana. Moreover, partners in Trinidad and Tobago facilitated public outreach and focus group discussions through social media which addressed topics of rape, domestic violence and incest, reaching more than 1,300 people. Health services for survivors and people at risk of GBV were delivered through Telehealth, a partner’s static clinic in Port of Spain and a community-based migrant clinic in the remote village of Icacos. In Aruba, partners delivered capacity building on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) and GBV for 16 frontline service providers in March and February. Additionally, 43 R4V partners’ staff members in Aruba and Curaçao were trained in Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and code of conduct matters.

Human trafficking networks continued to operate in the sub-region, but the context of the pandemic affected the modus operandi of traffickers. This led them to switch locations and to use less conspicuous modalities, thus making the identification of victims more challenging. Additionally, heightened vulnerabilities caused by COVID-19 increased exposure to the risk of trafficking.<sup>17</sup>

Simultaneously, the continued presence of COVID-19 has prompted humanitarian actors to prioritize emergencies and lifesaving activities. In doing so, reduced resources became

<sup>17</sup> *Venezuelans’ Vulnerability to Exploitation, Trafficking and Discrimination, Central America and the Caribbean, July 2019, DTM, The UN Migration Agency (IOM).*

**“ In June alone, one partner distributed more than 1,500 condoms to sex workers and provided remote information and sensitization sessions for 190 sex workers in Guyana. ”**

### e. Trafficking in Persons sub sector

available to support the sustainability of counter trafficking mechanisms, at least in the initial phase of the pandemic. Some services were maintained thanks to telemedicine and remote communications, and from January to December, 177 Venezuelan refugees and migrants were reached with information, sensitization and services.

In **Curaçao**, partners provided trainings on TIP and smuggling to the authorities and local NGOs. Additionally, R4V platform partners contributed to the establishment of SOPs, which will be launched in 2021. In **Guyana**, partners delivered a training on 3 and 4 September on TIP, including an information sharing session. **Aruba** held the National Day Against Human Trafficking on the 18 October and the Aruba Task Force organized the Week Against Human Trafficking, with a series of webinars, raising awareness on the issue.

In **Trinidad and Tobago**, this included the distribution of COVID-19 NFI Packages and Food assistance. In June, given the COVID-19 restrictions, partners provided psychosocial interventions via videocalls or in the event of internet connectivity limitations, via phone calls. This was a success, since the affected population feel more secure with remote counselling and need not travel for sessions.

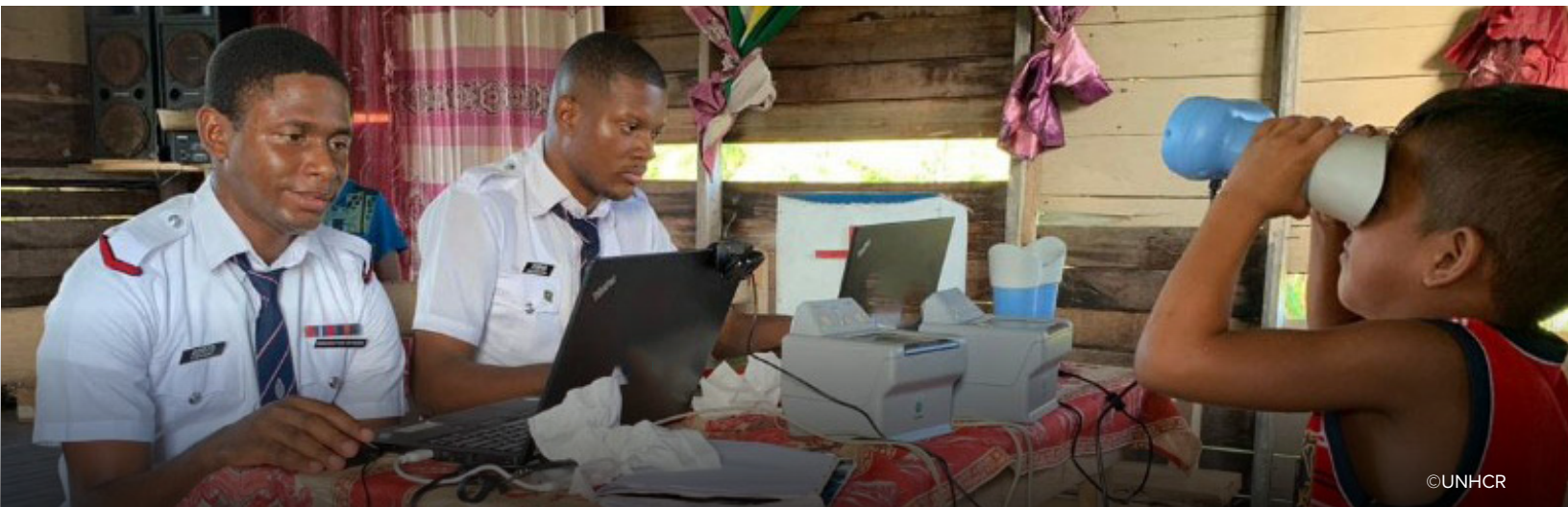
Amidst the pandemic and despite border closure and tighter controls in the Caribbean sub-region, smuggling activities continued. In March 2020, a boat sailing to Aruba sank with 32 persons on board. At least four survived and received treatment in the island. In September, T&T local newspaper reports indicated that 40 Venezuelans had entered by pirogue, eluding authorities. Separately, thirteen Venezuelan nationals, including six children and hiding near were detained by police on 26 September. The 13 were taken to a health facility and given quarantine orders. On 23 November, six persons were detained when arriving to Aruba and on the same day another boat with refugees and migrants and drugs was intercepted by authorities. Arrivals of boats with Venezuelan refugees and migrants onboard were also reported in Curaçao and Guyana. In Trinidad and Tobago, cases of kidnapping of Venezuelans for the purpose

of human trafficking have been reported. A rescue operation consequently identified a ring of national and foreign traffickers focusing on abducting young women between 19 – 27 years.

With the continuation of smuggling and TiP, in **Trinidad and Tobago**, R4V partners continued providing direct assistance to VoTs within the second half of 2020. The support included food assistance, provision of core relief items, accommodation assistance and medical and psychosocial support, including evaluation and follow-up counselling sessions. In Guyana, R4V partners completed their first three-day training session related to the implementation of standard procedures for prosecuting cases of TiP. Partners also developed a sensitization event on “Global Maritime Crime” with a specific focus on Smuggling of People and Trafficking at Sea to foster cooperation among different partners and primary stakeholders. Also, in Guyana two local NGOs conducted a walk-through public awareness campaign related to Trafficking in Persons, in two regions, during December 2020. These sessions covered four areas which include both refugee and migrant as well as Guyanese populations. During the sessions, several novelty items, posters, and brochures branded with anti-trafficking messages were distributed. Two days of awareness and distribution drive took place in one of Guyana’s interior regions on 1 December.

By the end of December 2020, Caribbean RMRP Partners were anticipating the January 2021 launch of the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2020 which highlights regional profiles on matters of human trafficking and data on several countries that related to this theme. Separately, partners also awaited the official January release of a CARIFORUM report

“ **Given the COVID-19 restrictions, partners provided psychosocial interventions via videocalls or in the event of internet connectivity limitations, via phone calls.** ”





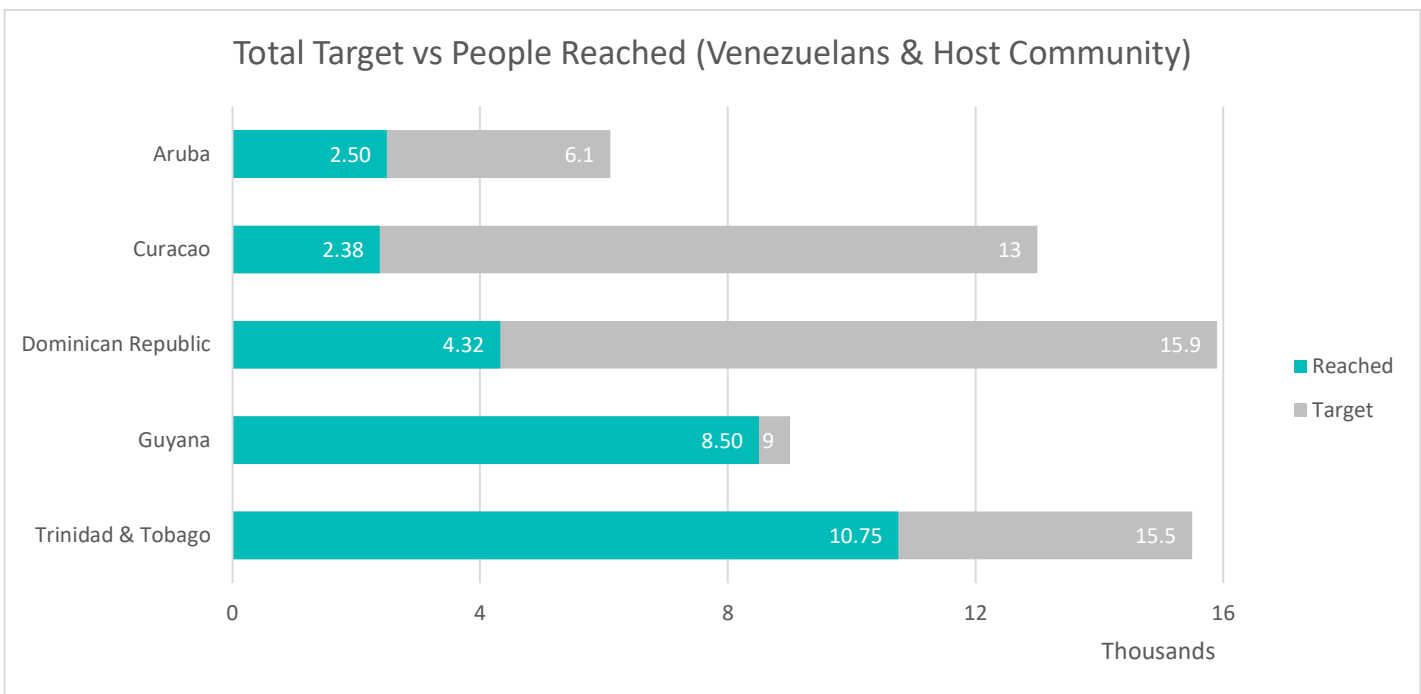
on human trafficking in the Caribbean and Latin America, where researcher Dr Justin Pierre, focused on the involvement of law enforcement in the trade. The research was commissioned with the assistance of CARICOM and involved questionnaires to 342 suspected human traffickers within the region. Analysing and putting the data together took approximately nine months and was completed in late 2020. Snapshots of the findings had been shared in a Trade and Investment Convention- Human Trafficking Presentation on 29 October 2020 with a diverse stakeholder including RMRP partners.

Due to a series of adverse factors including **irregular status, lack of alternative legal pathways to regularization, limited access**

**to essential services and language barriers**, prospects for the integration of Venezuelans in the Caribbean sub-region were very challenging. The perception that Venezuelans represent a high number relative to the host population, puts additional strain on public resources and does not contribute to a smooth integration process. The COVID-19 pandemic has made the context even more unfavorable, increasing socioeconomic precarity for Venezuelan refugees and migrants and undermining social cohesion<sup>18</sup>

In light of this situation, R4V partners have made efforts

<sup>18</sup> For more information on integration in the R4V Caribbean platform, please see [Integration Background Notes - Caribbean \(r4v.info\)](https://www.r4v.info)



## e. Integration

to foster integration activities. On the one hand, they have supported socioeconomic integration by **fostering livelihoods and advocating for easier access to work permits and to services, recognition of diplomas and professional skills and inclusion into the local work market**. Capacity strengthening was also supported, in particular through **English as a Second Language courses**. On the other hand, R4V has promoted social cohesion in order to curb xenophobia and discrimination by conducting **sensitization campaigns** that encourage peaceful coexistence, by highlighting the contributions of refugees and migrants and by fighting stereotypes of Venezuelans.

From January to December 2020, more than 1,000 Venezuelan refugees and migrants and members from the host community were reached with activities that supported integration in the

Caribbean. Examples of integration activities included the provision of classes of English as a Second Language, the support of **hammock weaving** performed by Venezuelan and Guyanese Warao Women and the production of cloth face masks by vulnerable individuals (single parents, sex workers, etc.) who had had their regular sources of income disrupted due to the pandemic. In **Guyana**, the latter was happening in collaboration with the Civil Defense Commission.

In the **Dominican Republic**, partners conducted a [market assessment](#) that showed the skills and expertise Venezuelans bring to the country, and how this could contribute to national development. In June, a mask business involving Venezuelans and local population



started with the support from NGOs and local governments in the **Dominican Republic**. Additionally, thanks to a joint initiative by R4V and the Office of National Immigration, [a video clip featuring Dominican singer Xiomara Fortuna](#), in Spanish was released on social media on May 13. The song Sácale Lo Pie is an Afro Caribbean tune that promotes stay at home measures and solidarity during the pandemic. Also, in the DR, one partner supported 33 Venezuelan entrepreneurs with seed capital to start their own businesses. Additionally, as part of a Gender Transformative Humanitarian Response Project in **Trinidad and Tobago**, partners supported a Sewing and Design Course for Venezuelan refugee and migrant women, where 80 graduates will receive sewing machines.

In August 2020, the R4V platform launched the campaign [“One Step Closer”](#), promoting messages of empathy, solidarity, and tolerance to refugees and migrants in 25 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The initiative features values, traditions, and historically shared customs in Spanish, English and Portuguese, delivering a

video that seeks to promote integration and sensibilization to the reality faced by refugee and migrants.

To promote the coordination of RMRP activities, and with the aim of ensuring the recognition and protection of refugees and migrants, and jointly delivering an effective and efficient humanitarian response, the sub-regional interagency coordination platform is composed of 5 national platforms. [The platform](#) had a total of **25 appealing partners, 12 in Curaçao, 8 in Dominican Republic, 6 in Guyana, 6 in Aruba and 6 in Trinidad and Tobago in 2020.**

The National Coordination Platforms brought together UNCT member organizations and various governmental, non-governmental, and international organizations of the civil society or other international cooperation bodies. The sub-regional platform provided guidance and support to national R4V coordination during the monthly core team and ad-hoc meetings, regular email communications and trainings.

### Consolidated Beneficiaries Year-to-Date

ARUBA	CURAÇAO	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	GUYANA	TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
2495	2380	4324	8501	10,752

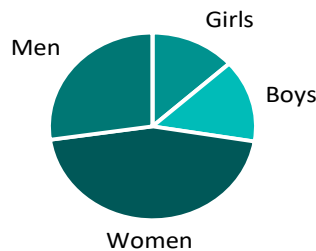


**3784**  
Girls under 18

**4064**  
Boys under 18

**12,838**  
Women 18 & over

**7766**  
Men 18 & over



COVID-19  
BENEFICIARIES  
**21,583**



In this adverse context, **World Refugee Day** was celebrated on 20 June throughout the Caribbean to highlight the needs and difficulties faced by this population and showcase how refugees and migrants positively contribute to host countries. R4V Partners hosted events, mainly virtual, throughout the sub-region, aimed at fostering solidarity with refugees and migrants and reducing xenophobia. Some events were shown on the United Nations Information Centre social media platforms and garnered significant positive press coverage.



World Refugee Day 2020, photo © HIAS

## 4. Coordination

Throughout January to December, the Sub-regional platform continued carrying out **advocacy interventions** with meetings with authorities happening across the Caribbean at different levels. Several meetings in 2020 were held with Curaçao authorities, as well as with the authorities of Aruba. To that end, and to address the need for greater inclusion in national protection systems during the pandemic, advocacy messages were updated in [May](#) and [November](#) 2020. Other meetings were carried out with platform members, authorities, embassies and donors continuously during the year. In order to strengthen and facilitate the reporting and data collection mechanism, an Activity Info site was launched and implemented, complemented by training sessions for users of the site. Partners can now provide monthly information on the activities carried out in an immediate and centralized way.

Additional coordination was established at the sectorial and sub sectorial levels, with new working groups set up in the national platforms. In **Guyana**, new GBV and TIP working groups were established while in **Aruba** and **Curaçao** new working groups in CWC were created. In **Trinidad and Tobago**, the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for an education working group were created, and the detention subgroup was set up under the protection working group. In **Aruba**, there were further efforts to coordinate work to counter xenophobia and to support education and alternative pathways to legal status.

Additionally, a new GBV sub-regional coordination mechanism for the Caribbean was established and coordination gaps between GBV and TIP sub-sectors were detected. To bridge them, a subregional GBV strategy will be developed based on mapping exercises carried out. A **GBV training** was held in March in Panama for the focal points on coordination mechanisms with 13 participants from partner organizations in the sub-region. Further coordination efforts were carried out with the regional sectors and subsectors of Protection, GBV and TIP, and the sub-regional platform. As part of these efforts, the **Guyana** national platform was included in discussions about the situation of indigenous refugees and migrants at the regional level, along with R4V colleagues of Colombia and Brazil. Two mappings of GBV services started in **Guyana**, one geographical on immediate assistance to survivors in field locations and another in collaboration with the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security. Both will be continuously updated.

New partnerships were also established across the sub-region, with an R4V partner in a diagnosis phase to implement their trafficking initiative **TRACK4TIP, in four of the five countries**. A round of introductory meetings

and needs assessments were carried out so far. Additionally, to complement the Global Humanitarian Response Plan of COVID 19 and with the objective of maintaining the RMRP's relevance for the needs of refugees and migrants from Venezuela, as well as affected host communities, the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform activated a **critical revision of all operations in the region**. The sub-regional platform engaged in the support process of the COVID-19 revision process to prioritize essential protection and life-saving actions in the Caribbean. Following a survey conducted with partners and a compilation of lessons learned, the review process was done in consultation with key R4V partners from the outset and in coordination with the regional and national levels. Thanks to the strong leadership by National/Sub-regional Platforms and Regional Sector Leads, [the Revised Plan was finalized](#) prior to the International Donors Conference hosted on 26 May by the Government of Spain and the European Union with the support of R4V leading agencies. This online pledging conference addressed the donor community and confirmed their committed support in the search of solutions for refugees and migrants from Venezuela in the region.

During the second semesters of 2020, all partners and agencies of the Caribbean R4V platform dedicated themselves relentlessly to prepare [the RMRP 2021](#). From 14 July to 5 October, instructions were shared regionally, several meetings were held between



# END OF YEAR REPORT

## CARIBBEAN SUB-REGIONAL PLATFORM



the sub-regional team and national platforms to deliver the document in a timely manner. National platforms put country narratives together, provided statistics and necessary data to build the document that guides the R4V platform entirely. In December, the document was published in [the R4V website](#). The Caribbean RMRP 2021 chapter was published under the general RMRP 2021 document and presents data, statistics and information for the five countries under the Caribbean regional platform.

By the end of 2021, it is estimated that the Caribbean sub-region will be hosting 224,000 Venezuelans. Under the RMRP 2021, in the sub-region, 26 partners will actively work with NGOs, civil society and Government counterparts to respond to the needs of Venezuelan refugees, migrants and host communities through activities in the sectors of protection, education, food security, health, shelter and integration, requiring a budget of USD 40.7 million. More details can be found in the Caribbean countries' factsheets for [Curaçao](#), [Dominican Republic](#), [Guyana](#), [Trinidad and Tobago](#), and [Aruba](#).

From 14 to 16 December, the R4V Platform successfully held the online launch event for the RMRP 2021 in Aruba, Curaçao, Guyana and Dominican Republic. The events gathered on average 40 participants from a range of UN agencies, NGOs, community-led associations from the Venezuelan diaspora and government actors including Prime Ministers from Aruba and Curaçao. The launches were welcomed, and participants provided positive feedback.

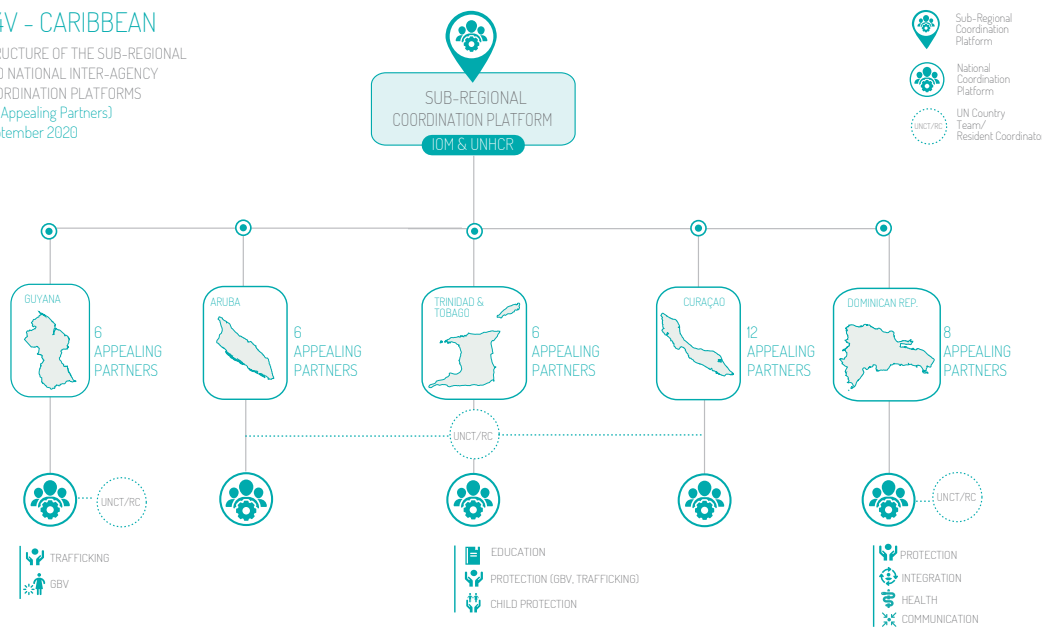
Furthermore, to provide a regional perspective of the situation of refugees and migrants in the Caribbean, monthly Situation Reports per country were substituted by one **Caribbean Situation Report** and a **Monthly Summary of Activities for Guyana**. Weekly COVID-19, Trafficking in Persons and Integration updates were also produced to keep abreast of situational developments. Finally, the R4V team has completed the 2020 R4V training plan. In 2020, 372 appealing partner participants attended 19 R4V capacity building activities in Reporting, Coordination, RMRP planning, contingency planning, participatory assessment, communication with communities and PSEA, throughout the Caribbean. Eight training sessions were delivered in **Aruba** and **Curaçao**, two in the **Dominican Republic**, three in **Guyana**, four in **Trinidad and Tobago** and two for multiple locations.

Venezuelan refugees and migrants continue to encounter challenges in the sub-region, such as the **lack of regularization pathways, limited access to asylum and the consequent exposure of undocumented individuals to trafficking, abuse and exploitation**. Many Venezuelans already lived without a regular status before the outbreak of the pandemic which has hindered their ability to access rights, public services and formal livelihoods as well as increase their self-reliance and independence.

To add to this already worrisome situation, during the first quarter of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic considerably increased the **vulnerability** of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the five countries of the sub-region, as it impacted the economy and public health of the host countries. The shutdown of the subregional economies caused a brutal impact on the livelihoods of refugees and

### R4V - CARIBBEAN

STRUCTURE OF THE SUB-REGIONAL AND NATIONAL INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION PLATFORMS (25 Appealing Partners) September 2020



#### Appealing Organizations:

Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Bolivarian Society of Curaçao, Caritas Willemstad, Colonia Foundation of Venezuelans in the Dominican Republic, Famia Planea, Fundacion pa Hende Muhe den Dificultad, Globalzate Radio, Heartland Alliance International, HIAS, Human Rights Caribbean Foundation, ILO, IOM, Panamerican Health Organization/World Health Organization, Salú pa Tur, Stima Foundation, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNFPA, VenAruba Solidaria, VenEuropa, Venex Curaçao Foundation, Stichting Slachtofferhulp Curaçao, Family Planning Association of Trinidad and Tobago

## 5. Challenges and Unmet Needs

migrants and of host population, since **movement restrictions** impeded the continuation of informal livelihoods, where most refugees and migrants were employed. As a consequence, there was an increase in the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance, but refugees and migrants with non-residency status were **left out of institutional assistance schemes** and lived in uncertainty during the back-and-forth phases between the lockdown and the reopening of economies. Loss of livelihoods and insecurity regarding shelter and food persisted throughout 2020.

While public health regulations and movement restriction measures continued, partners had to quickly **adjust to implementing remote work modalities** to ensure limited physical interaction with refugees and migrants. Areas such as telemedicine and communications have made giant leaps thanks to technological support. Nevertheless, logistical challenges to provide assistance in remote areas remain, such as in Guyana's mining areas, hinterland areas and border areas where indigenous refugees and migrants live among indigenous communities.

In 2020, 74% of the budgetary requirements were reached by RMRP partners in the Caribbean and there was a **funding gap of**

**26%**. Limited funding prevented the Sub-regional platform and its partners from responding to immediate humanitarian needs, drastically reducing the number of people to whom partners can provide assistance. Underfunding undermines efforts to foster durable solutions. Partners were therefore obliged to prioritize beneficiaries through a needs-based approach to support the most vulnerable, leaving many in need of assistance out.





## 6. The Way Forward

The Sub-regional Platform will continue **advocating for the inclusion** of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the national response plans, for access to testing, treatment and vaccination, as well as essential services and assistance, the adoption of **measures to regularize stays and the suspension of evictions**. Moreover, partners will continue to advocate for inclusion of refugees and migrants in national Social Protection mechanisms. To address the effects of the crisis and build on resilience of affected refugees and migrants in the five countries, R4V partners will **prioritize the delivery of life-saving assistance**, such as CBI, food and NFI distribution, medical aid, psycho-social support, shelter emergency assistance and protection interventions. Case Management and registration remain main priorities in **Guyana** and **Trinidad and Tobago**, while GBV prevention and response remain key areas of support for R4V partners in the sub-region.

In **Aruba**, the **Dominican Republic**, **Guyana** and **Trinidad and Tobago**, Multipurpose Cash Grants will need to be further increased, allowing recipients to meet their most pressing needs. To guarantee food distribution, partners will reach out to local food banks to establish durable cooperation schemes and will ensure the delivery of standardized food packages. Finally, R4V partners will focus on resuming education activities as soon as COVID-19 social distancing measures are lifted. Several partners

have been overwhelmed meeting COVID-19 needs and are anticipating funding shortages which will exacerbate current challenges and pose further difficulties in assisting beneficiaries. In **Trinidad and Tobago**, with Child Friendly Spaces temporarily closed, R4V partners will keep working to ensure that Venezuelan children continue to have access to education through the [Equal Place Program](#). In **Guyana**, shelter, livelihoods and food security will be prioritized.

In the next months, **2021 RMRP activities** will be monitored, and support will be provided for R4V partners in order to ensure the smooth running of the planned programmes and activities. Vaccination campaigns are expected to happen in the first semester of the year, which might positively impact the situation of refugees and migrants in the Caribbean. **Aruba** and **Curaçao** will have Venezuelans and other migrants included in the campaigns, although prioritization plans are still being developed. **Dominican Republic's** [government has declared](#) that their commitment is to vaccinate Dominican nationals first and foremost and that for irregular migrants the government will request WHO support. **Trinidad and Tobago** and **Guyana** government's plans remain to be released. These developments will potentially require a revision of the RMRP 2021. Updates, monitoring and information products will be shared continuously through the R4V platform.

### Next steps and priorities will include:

- Improve structure and operationalization of the national R4V coordination platforms and sector working groups/ sub-regional protection sector coordination.
- Contingency planning in all five countries including for COVID-19 to ensure readiness of partners and resilience for refugees and migrants, adapting to new normal.
- Guidance to national platforms (i.e., sharing of best practices), increasing regional buy-in for the R4V platform (Regional WGs, platforms, new partners etc.).
- Evaluate the 2020 RMRP response, implement the 2021 RMRP and monitor its response.
- Develop a protection and GBV Venezuela Caribbean Situation strategy and strengthen inter-agency responses.
- Increase monitoring and advocacy related to access to territory, asylum and alternative legal pathways for entry and stay, and key protection concerns (i.e., deportations/detentions and access to justice) at national platform level
- Provide capacity building of appealing and operational partners in protection (including PSEA, GBV, TIP), reporting, information management, coordination and program.
- Strengthen national institutions and the capacity of public services, advocating for the inclusion of Venezuelan refugees and migrants.

**PARTNERS IN THE RESPONSE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF:**



### For more information contact:

Catalina Acevedo, Caribbean Sub-Regional Coordination Officer, IOM, [cacevedo@iom.int](mailto:cacevedo@iom.int)

Miriam Aertker, Senior Field Coordinator, UNHCR, [aertker@unhcr.org](mailto:aertker@unhcr.org)

**FINANCIAL TRACKING SYSTEM:** [HTTPS://FTS.UNOCHA.ORG/APPEALS/944/SUMMARY](https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/944/summary)

Find out more

[www.R4V.info](http://www.R4V.info)

